

Town of



AMHERST *Massachusetts*

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To: Stephanie O'Keeffe, Chair, Chair, Amherst Select Board
Members of the Amherst Select Board

From: Laurence Shaffer, Town Manager

Re: Response to the Goals and Expectation Memo of January 12, 2009

Date: January 20, 2009

I appreciate the effort that the Select Board has made to create goals and expectation for the present fiscal year. Allow me to make a number of general observations before I comment on the eight suggested goals and expectations.

First, the goals and expectations must be tied back to the Town Act. With that in mind, I would like to summarize a portion of the Town Act requirements for the select board and town manager.

- Select Board
 1. TA – 3.221 – “The select board shall appoint town manager....and shall supervise the manager as provided in Section 4.1
 2. TA – 4.1 – “The select board shall appoint a town manager.....The town manager shall devote full time to the duties....the town manager shall be sworn in...
 3. TA – 4.7 – “The select board shall conduct an annual review for the purpose of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the manager’s performance. The review shall be based on a written list of performance criteria developed by the select board”
- Town Manager
 1. TA – 4.51 – “...the town manager shall appoint.....all town employees...”

2. TA – 4.52 – “The town manager shall fix....the initial compensation of all appointed town officers and employees....”
3. TA – 4.53 – “The town manager shall have the authority to employ and discharge town counsel.”
4. TA – 4.54 – “The town manager shall appoint.....members of the planning board, conservation commission, historical commission and board of health.....assessors and as needed....”
5. TA – 4.55 – “The town manager shall supervise the boards, committees and commissions...to ensure that the charge is carried out in a timely manner and meetings are held in conformance with the laws....”
6. TA – 4.61 – “The town manager shall be the chief administrative and fiscal officer of the town....”
7. TA – 4.611 – “The town manager shall supervise and directall officers and employees....”
8. TA 4.612 – “The town manager may....examine the records of any office or department...”
9. TA 4.613 – “The town manager may....reorganize, consolidate or abolish ...departments under the manager’s authority...”
10. TA 4.621 – “The town manager shall attend regular meeting of the select board...”
11. TA 4.622 – “The town manager shall ensure thatrecords ...shall be available...to the select board...”
12. TA 4.623 – “The town manager shall keep the select board fully advised as to the needs of the town....”
13. TA 4.63 – “The town manager shall have jurisdiction over....all town property....”
14. TA 4.641 – “The town manager shall purchase all supplies, materials and shall award all contracts”
15. TA 4.65 – “The town manager shall have the authority to prosecute, defend and compromise all litigation...”

The purpose of the previous is to outline the obligations of the town manager and the select board as it applies to the Town Act.

Relative to the “Draft Town Manager Goals and Expectations”, as prepared by the Chair and dated January 12, 2009, allow me the following comments.

- I would enhance the first goal by acknowledging the financial challenge before us and outlining specific goals to meet those challenges.
The Town Manager shall develop a specific recommendation for consideration by the Select Board and Town Meeting to address the revenue crisis.
- Goal two and goal three should be combined. The Personnel Board should be included in this effort. What does the Select Board wish to achieve and how might it be stated? How is morale affected by entities other than the Town Manager?
The Town Manager shall develop and implement a plan that improves morale and lines of communications between all employees. The Town

Manager will incorporate Human Resources as a source for training, wellness and professional development into the goal of improving morale.

- Goal four requires taking steps to ensure closer communication with the Select Board. I would agree with the goal as written.
- Goal five requires the creation of an economic development plan. Such a plan has been articulated but I would agree that a formal, adopted plan would serve as an important tool.
- Goal six is a technique to improve efficiency. I would suggest that the goal might be better stated that improved efficiency and effectiveness is important goal and that the identification and implementation of efficiencies and effectiveness tools, from all sources, employees and citizens, is encouraged.
- Goal seven speaks to the collection of customer satisfaction feedback. Formal systems are available for customer satisfaction feedback and with sufficient resources, may be implemented. I would agree with the goal.
- Goal eight speaks to create a centralized volunteer system for recruitment, training and retention of volunteers. I would agree with the goal and would suggest that such a system will require resources to implement.

The strongest goals are those that are clearly stated and identify specific outcomes. The economic development plan goal might be an example of the difference between outcomes (product) and process (means to achieve the product). Allow me to suggest that an appropriate goal might be to increase the amount of revenue or to decrease the amount of expense in the delivery of public services. The means to achieve an increase in revenue include the expansion of the tax base that might be the result of the economic development plan. The creation of an economic development plan does not meet the goal. One might create a lovely economic development plan and not increase revenue at all.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.